



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

10/594,777

10/04/2007

Matthew Trevor Snowden

Stolt-57

7103

39703

7590

03/25/2010

C. JAMES BUSHMAN
5851 San Felipe
SUITE 975
HOUSTON, TX 77057

EXAMINER

ANDRISH, SEAN D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3672

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

03/25/2010

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/594,777	Applicant(s) SNOWDON ET AL.	
	Examiner SEAN D. ANDRISH	Art Unit 3672	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 - 22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 - 22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 29 September 2006 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

Art Unit: 3672

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

1. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on 22 January 2007 was filed in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97. Accordingly, the information disclosure statement is being considered by the examiner.

Priority

2. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Drawings

3. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference character(s) not mentioned in the description: "206".

4. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include the following reference sign(s) mentioned in the description: "clamp 133" and "sheave 6302".

6. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) because they fail to show the pin connecting arm 6306 to the fixed structure 6300 as described in the specification.

7. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the "tensioning means is detached from and supported independently of the tiltable structure", as recited in claim 7; the "range of angles either side of vertical", as recited in claim 8; the "pad comprising a base piece bolted to the tensioning means and an insert fitted with a quick release mechanism", as recited in claim 14; the "operating equipment includes the overboarding means itself, which is detached from said

Art Unit: 3672

tiltable structure in said first mode”, as recited in claim 19; and the “operating equipment includes the tensioning means itself, which is detached from and supported independently of said tiltable structure in said second mode”, as recited in claim 20, must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

8. The drawings are objected to because:

- a. It appears that Fig. 1(a) illustrates the pipe handling apparatus in two different positions (200, 200'). Applicant should clearly distinguish between the two positions (200, 200') or should create two separate figures, one figure illustrating the apparatus in the vertical orientation and one figure illustrating the apparatus in the inclined position. If applicant would like to illustrate both positions (200, 200') in one figure, one possible solution for Fig. 1(a) would be to illustrate the apparatus in position 200' using dashed lines. A similar problem is found in Fig. 2.
- b. In Fig. 2, applicant should clarify how the module 208 (positioned at the far left-hand side of the drawing) is connected to the apparatus (200). If the module 208 positioned at the left-hand side of the drawing is an exploded view of module 208 attached to the apparatus 200, the exploded view should be given a separate figure number.
- c. In Fig. 2, applicant should assign a reference character to the unlabeled arrow.
- d. In Fig. 2, applicant should clarify how module 130 is attached the other elements of apparatus 200.
- e. In Fig. 3, applicant should clarify how the module 240 (positioned at the far left-hand side of the drawing) is connected to the other elements of the pipe handling

Art Unit: 3672

apparatus. If the module 240 positioned at the left-hand side of the drawing is an exploded view of module 240 attached to the pipe handling apparatus, the exploded view should be given a separate figure number.

f. In Fig. 3, applicant should assign a reference character to the unlabeled arrow.

g. In Fig. 6(a), applicant should clarify how the module (6212, 6208) (positioned at the far left-hand side of the drawing) is connected to the other elements of the pipe handling apparatus. If the module (6212, 6208) positioned at the left-hand side of the drawing is an exploded view of module 6208 attached to the pipe handling apparatus, the exploded view should be given a separate figure number.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as “amended.” If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency.

Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the

Art Unit: 3672

applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

9. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: the phrase “ram 6306” as recited on page 13, line 24 of the specification should be “arm 6306”.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Objections

10. Claim 13 is objected to because of the following informalities: The phrase “the hydraulic control system” lacks proper antecedent basis in the claims and, therefore, the phrase should be changed to "a hydraulic control system". Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

11. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

12. Claims 1 - 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The phrase "overboarding means" as recited in claims 1 and 15 lacks enabling disclosure.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

13. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

Art Unit: 3672

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

14. Claims 1 - 9, 11 - 13, and 15 - 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Willis (5,975,802).

Regarding claim 1, Willis discloses an apparatus comprising: tensioning means (tensioner 19); a tiltable structure (ramp 16), said structure tiltable between a upright and horizontal states; the apparatus is operable in a first mode (solid-lined figure illustrated in Fig. 9) and in a second mode (dashed-lined figure illustrated in Fig. 9); and overboarding means (roller box 63) (Fig. 9; column 3, lines 4 - 22; column 6, lines 20 - 21).

Regarding claims 2, 3, and 17, Willis further discloses a radius controller (17, 57) and a straightener (60), said radius controller and straightener are provided at least partially in the form of removable modules (Fig. 9; column 3, line 4; column 6, lines 10 - 14).

Regarding claim 4, Willis further discloses the overboarding means comprises a sheave (pulleys 49) (Figs. 7 - 9; column 5, lines 28 - 31). Examiner notes that winch 51 is another tensioning means, said sheave (49) receiving the flexible elongate product from the tensioning means (51).

Regarding claim 5, Willis further discloses the overboarding means (pulleys 49) is provided at least partially in the form of a removable module (shelter 47) (Fig. 9; column 5, lines 28 - 30).

Regarding claim 6, Willis further discloses the tiltable structure (ramp 16) is operable in the first mode to orient the tensioning means (19) vertically and at a range of angles below vertical (Fig. 9; column 5, lines 57 - 60).

Art Unit: 3672

Regarding claim 7, Willis further discloses wherein in said second mode the tensioning means (tensioner 29) is detached from and supported independently of the tiltable structure (16), the tiltable structure (16) being returned to an upright orientation for supporting loads independently of said tensioning means (29) (Fig. 9; column 4, lines 26 - 28).

Regarding claim 8, Willis further discloses the tiltable structure (16) can be operated in the second mode at a range of angles either side of vertical (Fig. 1). Examiner notes that the pipe laying zone (12) of the tiltable structure is positioned on the ship-facing side of vertical (vertical is defined as the vertical plane that runs through the pivot point about which the fixed clamp 20 rotates as shown in Fig. 1) and the pipe section attached to the bottom end of the pipe laying zone (12) is positioned on the seaward side of vertical. The seaward side of the tiltable structure is located on the opposite side of vertical with respect to the ship-facing side of the tiltable structure.

Regarding claims 9 and 18, Willis further discloses the tensioning means (19) in the second mode is located at a position displaced horizontally from a location from which it will be elevated by said tiltable structure in the first mode (Fig. 1).

Regarding claim 11, Willis further discloses wherein the tiltable structure (16) is movable to provide said horizontal displacement of the tensioning means (19) (Fig. 1).

Regarding claim 12, Willis further discloses the tiltable structure (16) is connected to the vessel by one or more pivotable arms (stays 54) (Fig. 10; column 5, line 64 - column 6, line 2).

Regarding claim 13, Willis further discloses a dual hydraulic system (hydraulic rams 53) (Fig. 10; column 5, lines 53 - 60).

Art Unit: 3672

Regarding claim 15, Willis discloses a method as discussed above and further discloses detaching certain operating equipment (wire 50) from the structure (column 6, lines 57 - 58).

Regarding claim 16, Willis further discloses the operating equipment (wire 50) is provided as a module which can be removed and relocated with respect to the structure (column 6, lines 57 - 58; column 7, lines 13 - 15).

Regarding claim 19, Willis further discloses wherein said operating equipment includes overboarding means (roller box 63), which is detached from said tiltable structure in the first mode (Fig. 10). Fig. 10 illustrates the roller box (63) is attached to an unlabeled element (unlabeled rectangular structure) and said unlabeled element is attached to the ramp (16). Examiner interprets the claim limitation "detached from" as meaning that the overboarding means is not directly attached to the tiltable structure and, given this interpretation, Fig. 10 of Willis illustrates the overboarding means (63) is detached from the tiltable structure (16) as best understood by the examiner.

Regarding claim 20, Willis further discloses said operating equipment includes the tensioning means (tensioner 29), which is detached from and supported independently of said tiltable structure (16) in said second mode (Fig. 9; column 4, lines 26 - 28).

Regarding claim 21, Willis further discloses the tensioning means (19) gripping and paying out the flexible pipeline (15) while supported on said tiltable structure (16) at an angle aligned with the angle of departure of the pipeline (15) from the vessel (Fig. 1).

Regarding claim 22, Willis further discloses the tensioning means (19) gripping and paying out the flexible pipeline (15) along said substantially horizontal axis, the pipeline (15) being diverted by said overboarding means (stern roller box 63) from said horizontal axis to the

Art Unit: 3672

angle of departure of the pipeline (15) from the vessel (Fig. 9; column 3, lines 4 - 12 and lines 22 - 27; column 6, lines 20 - 21; claim 16).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

15. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

16. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Willis in view of Stockstill (6,554,538). Willis discloses all of the limitations of the above claim(s) except for a pair of legs pivoted to the deck of the vessel at their lower ends and joined by a crossbeam at their upper ends, the tensioning means in the first mode being carried between the legs below the crossbeam, with a straightener and radius controller mounted above the crossbeam and being detachable when adapting the apparatus into the second mode. Stockstill teaches an apparatus comprising: a pair of legs (legs of tilting tower 19 located between welding station 26 and hull 11) pivoted to the deck (hull 11) of the vessel at their lower ends and joined by a crossbeam (welding station 26) at their upper ends, the tensioning means (tensioner 23) in the first mode being carried between the legs below the crossbeam (26), with a straightener (22) and radius controller (bend controller 21) mounted above the crossbeam and being detachable when adapting the apparatus into the second mode (Figs. 1, 1A, and 3; column 8, lines 64 - 67; column 9, lines 20 - 37; column 10, line 4) to enable a pipeline to be welded and then wound upon either of two reels and to be unwound from either of the two reels for launching to the sea bed via the tower. It would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the

Art Unit: 3672

invention was made, to have modified the apparatus as disclosed by Willis with the legs and crossbeam structure as taught by Stockstill to enable a pipeline to be welded and then wound upon either of two reels and to be unwound from either of the two reels for launching to the sea bed via the tower.

17. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Willis in view of Willis et al. (2002/0021942). Willis discloses all of the limitations of the above claim(s) except for the tensioning means includes pads for gripping the elongate article, each pad comprising a base piece bolted to the tensioning means and an insert fitted with a quick release mechanism. Willis et al. teaches a tensioning means includes a pad comprising a base piece (clamping shoe 72) bolted (unlabeled bolt connecting clamping shoe 72 to radial piston 60; see Fig. 4) to the tensioning means (tensioner 26, including radial piston 60) and an insert (friction tile 76) with a quick release mechanism (friction tile can be changed to accommodate changes in the diameter of the article to be laid) (Fig. 4; paragraphs 0072, 0075, and 0082) to allow the configuration of the tile to be changed to suit the elongate article being laid (for example, its radius of curvature) and in the event of wear or damage. It would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to have modified the apparatus as disclosed by Willis with the tensioning means comprising a pad as taught by Willis et al. to allow the configuration of the tile to be changed to suit the elongate article being laid (for example, its radius of curvature) and in the event of wear or damage.

Art Unit: 3672

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to SEAN D. ANDRISH whose telephone number is (571)270-3098. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon - Fri, 7:30am - 5:00pm, Alternate Fri off, EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bagnell can be reached on (571) 272-6999. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/John Kreck/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3672

SDA
3/22/2010